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 SUBJECT: POLITICAL STARS WAX AND WANE: SWAPO HOLDS ITS
 ELECTORAL COLLEGE

Classified By: Ambassador Dennise Mathieu for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) On September 5 and 6, Namibia's ruling party, the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO), held its electoral college. Delegates from around the country threw their hats into the ring in hopes of becoming one of 72 on the party list, contenders for a seat in the National Assembly. Familiar faces dominate the list, but there were a few unexpected changes. Five deputy ministers, who were new entrants on SWAPO's 2004 party list, moved into the top 20. Three ministers fell to the bottom ten, rendering their chances of winning seats nearly impossible. President Pohamba, who by party rules is able to choose ten candidates, surprised some with his selections. And many are disappointed that none of the representatives from SWAPO's elders', women's and unionist wings received enough votes to make the list at all.

¶2. (U) This cable is the latest in a series on Namibia's preparations for the November 2009 elections. The full party list appears in paragraph 15. End summary.

 The Mechanics of the Electoral College

¶3. (U) SWAPO held its much-anticipated electoral college on September 5 and 6. Namibia's political structure is based on the party list system. It is not public knowledge how most of the smaller political parties conduct their electoral colleges or compile their party lists, but SWAPO's process is well-known. The SWAPO electoral college convenes once every five years in the months leading up to the general election. This year, the electoral college was composed of the following: all 83 members of SWAPO's Central Committee; 17 members of parliament (MPs) who are not in the Central Committee; five delegates from each of the 13 regions (65 people); five delegates from the party's Elders' Council; ten delegates from the party's Women's Council; five delegates from the SWAPO Party Youth League (SPYL); and five delegates from the National Union of Namibian Workers (NUNW), a SWAPO-affiliated organization.

¶4. (SBU) In the end, SWAPO presents a list of 72 names. Delegates vote for 59 of those candidates, all of whom are college delegates themselves. In addition, SWAPO's vice president, secretary general, and deputy secretary general automatically take the top three spots on the list. These are added to 10 delegates personally chosen by Pohamba, who are "zebra-striped" into the list. This year, Pohamba's picks come in at number 24 and alternate every other slot until number 42. Pohamba announced his choices after the college's elections. Typically the ten are the president's chance to promote people who are not generally regarded as heavyweights in government or the ruling party and might otherwise not be elected.

15. (U) Pundits have been quick to call the list "more of the same" with a "remarkable level of continuity." Most of the 72 names are well-known SWAPO stalwarts who are already serving in the National Assembly. It is worth noting, however, that several deputy ministers who were new entrants to the list in 2004, scored well and moved into the top 20. They are: Utoni Nujoma of the Ministry of Justice (and former president Sam Nujoma's son); Kazenambo Kazenambo of the Ministry of Regional, Local Government, Housing and Rural Development; Petrina Haingura of the Ministry of Health and Social Services; Tjekero Tweya of the Ministry of Finance; and Pohamba Shifeta of the Ministry of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture.

16. (SBU) Three ministers--- Marlene Mungunda of Gender Equality and Child Welfare (at number 63), Willem Konjore of Youth, National Service, Sport and Culture (at 67), and Helmut Angula of Works, Transport and Communication (at 70) came in at the bottom of the list. The latter two repeatedly have found themselves at odds with the SPYL and the NUNW. The Youth League has accused Helmut Angula and Minister of Environment of Tourism Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, who did not fare much better at 55, of being "hibernators" of the opposition Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP).

17. (C) None of the Elders' Council or Women's Council representatives made it onto the party list, although women do constitute 33 percent of the total list. Of the SPYL's five delegates, two succeeded. The first is Paulus Kapia (at 25), who in 2005 resigned as deputy minister of Works, Transport and Communication and was suspended from the SPYL after he was linked to an investment scandal. The SPYL declared Kapia "rehabilitated" earlier this year despite his ongoing trial. The second, Piet Van der Walt (at 44), is new to politics and the first Afrikaner ever to make SWAPO's list of his own accord (Note: Other SWAPO MPs of Afrikaner origin have been brought in to government as presidential appointments. End note.) According to Windhoek City Counselor and SWAPO insider Gerson Kamatuka, many in the party are disappointed that the "wings" of the party did not fare better. This sentiment was not ignored by the opposition Congress of Democrats, which reached out to the groups this week, arguing that SWAPO had betrayed them and promising them better representation in its own party structures.

18. (C) Regional councillors and members of the National Council, Namibia's upper house of parliament, also left the electoral college unhappy, Kamatuka remarked. They had been promised that for the first time this year, they could stand for the National Assembly, but were told at the college that this was not possible. Kamatuka explained that SWAPO disapproves of the councillors abandoning their positions mid-term, because the party would then "gamble with bi-elections" to fill their seats.

19. (SBU) Many observers were surprised by Pohamba's choices, the majority of whom are unknown not only to the general public but also to SWAPO watchers. Moreover, Pohamba's decision to include the highly popular Minister of Finance Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, whose name has been bandied about as a possible prime minister, has left many perplexed. The Finance Minister told The Namibian newspaper that she did not stand for election because the president asked her in confidence to be included in his list of ten. The paper also reports that Pohamba compiled his list and confirmed his candidates' interest shortly before the college began.

Safe at 51?

110. (C) The Namibian National Assembly consists of 72 seats. Of those, SWAPO currently holds 55 or two-thirds. While the party has publicly stated it attends to win 100 percent of the seats in November, behind the scenes some SWAPO members

are concerned that the RDP may pose a threat at the polls. Kamatuka told Poloff that numbers 55 and below "were not sleeping well." He ventured that 54 through 51 probably also feel insecure, and then asked, "Do you think it could be worse than that?"

Comment

¶11. (C) Pohamba's picks appear to be gestures to communities that are otherwise not well-represented on the list. Sylvia Makgone (at 42) is both a woman and a member of the Tswana ethnic group, for instance. More curious is his decision to include Kuugongelwa-Amadhila. The Minister of Finance is very popular and could have easily placed well on her own. It is possible that the president may have used Kuugongelwa-Amdahila as political cover so that he could bring in the unpopular Minister of Defense Charles Namoloh without this selection appearing out-of-place. Pohamba will have the chance to add six more names to the list if he is re-elected president. The six would be non-voting MPs or they could be given positions as ministers or deputy ministers. Should he be re-elected, the President may feel pressure to promote the five rising stars from deputy ministers to ministers.

¶12. (C) Also unexpected were the SPYL's delegate choices. None of the SPYL's leadership chose to represent the out-spoken and often controversial organization at the college. It is possible that SPYL determined that the college would not bring about major changes in the party's leadership and did not want to risk running for office at this time. The group may take solace in the fact, however, that their ongoing efforts to discredit Helmut Angula and Willem Konjore may have helped to hasten the end of their political careers. There is still a chance Pohamba could intervene and save them with his final six slots. Interestingly Pohamba, and not the SPYL, injected the most new blood into the list.

¶13. (C) It should be noted that a few SWAPO stalwarts chose to retire this year. Some, such as the popular Deputy Prime Minister, Libertina Amathila, would have likely made the list easily, while others, such as Minister of Veterans Affairs Ngarikutuke Tjiriange were rumored to lack the support necessary for inclusion among the 72.

¶14. (C) The continuity between current SWAPO leadership and the new party list seems to indicate that supporters are generally satisfied with the direction the party is taking. Although it remains unclear whether the much-speculated divisions within SWAPO are subsiding.

¶15. (U) The SWAPO Party list of candidates to the National Assembly as elected by the electoral college (in order of highest ranking to lowest ranking):

- ¶1. Hage Geingob
- ¶2. Pendukene Iivula-Ithana
- ¶3. Nangolo Mbumba
- ¶4. Jerry Ekandjo
- ¶5. Utoni Nujoma
- ¶6. Alpheus Naruseb
- ¶7. Abraham Iyambo
- ¶8. Petrina Haingura
- ¶9. Nchabi Richard Kamwi
- ¶10. Kazenambo Kazenambo
- ¶11. Joel Kaapanda
- ¶12. Erkki Nghimtina
- ¶13. John Mutoawa
- ¶14. Nahas Angula
- ¶15. Tjekeo Tweya
- ¶16. Petrus Iilonga
- ¶17. Theo-Ben Gurirab
- ¶18. Immanuel Ngatjizeko
- ¶19. Pohamba Shifeta
- ¶20. Elia Kaiyamo

- [¶21. Albert Kawana](#)
- [¶22. Bernhard Esau](#)
- [¶23. Doreen Sioka](#)
- [¶24. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila](#)
- [¶25. Ilonga Paulus Kapia](#)
- [¶26. Charles Namholo](#)
- [¶27. Peya Mushelenga](#)
- [¶28. Alpheus Muheua](#)
- [¶29. Loide Kasingo](#)
- [¶30. Monica Nashandi](#)
- [¶31. Erastus Uutoni](#)
- [¶32. Billy Mwaningange](#)
- [¶33. Marco Hausiku](#)
- [¶34. Lucia Witbooi](#)
- [¶35. Angelika Muharukua](#)
- [¶36. Auguste Xoagus](#)
- [¶37. Chief Samuel Ankama](#)
- [¶38. Uahekua Herunga](#)
- [¶39. Rosalia Ndhidinua](#)
- [¶40. Willem Isaack](#)
- [¶41. Nickey Iyambo](#)
- [¶42. Sylvia Makgone](#)
- [¶43. David Namwandi](#)
- [¶44. Piet Van der Walt](#)
- [¶45. Lempy Lucas](#)
- [¶46. Isak Katali](#)
- [¶47. Tommy Nambahu](#)
- [¶48. Elifas Dingara](#)
- [¶49. Festus Ueitele](#)
- [¶50. Juliet Kavetuna](#)
- [¶51. Moses Amweelo](#)
- [¶52. Evelyne Nawases-Taeyele](#)
- [¶53. Alexia Manambo-Ncube](#)
- [¶54. Ben Amathila](#)
- [¶55. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah](#)
- [¶56. Lucia Basson](#)
- [¶57. Raphael Dinyando](#)
- [¶58. Royal J.K. /Ui/O/Oo](#)
- [¶59. Teopolina Mushelenge](#)
- [¶60. Otto Ipinge](#)
- [¶61. Becky Ndjoze-Ojo](#)
- [¶62. Sylvia Kandanga-Sheetekela](#)
- [¶63. Marlene Mungunda](#)
- [¶64. Korbian Viscaya Amutenya](#)
- [¶65. Victor Simunja](#)
- [¶66. David Namalenga](#)
- [¶67. Willem Konjore](#)
- [¶68. Sussy Gideon](#)
- [¶69. Paul Smith](#)
- [¶70. Helmut Angula](#)
- [¶71. Ida Hoffman](#)
- [¶72. Hansina Christiaan](#)

MATHIEU